

Environmental Action

UPDATE

A Quarterly Newsletter about the McClellan AFB Environmental Activities - California

April 1998

McClellan's Natural Resources

McClellan Air Force Base has an abundance of wetlands scattered throughout the 250 acres of undeveloped land on the main base (*see graphic on Page 2*). Wetlands are areas that are regularly saturated by surface water and are characterized by specific vegetation adapted for life in wet conditions. McClellan's wetlands are located primarily on the western side of the base north of Don Julio Creek. Because of this, McClellan has designated this area as the base's nature area.

Vernal pools are low areas or depressions in the wetlands where winter and spring rains naturally accumulate. As these depressions fill with water during the rainy season, the water stimulates the life cycle of both the plant and animal species that lie dormant in the pools.

As the spring season progresses and the vernal pools begin to dry, the aquatic animal species enter their dormant stage and a unique group of wetland plant species begins to flower making March and April the best time for viewing the flowering plants. Resources like the wetlands and vernal pools provide food, cover, and water for many wildlife species year-round.

McClellan, as the steward of Air Force property, meets the requirements mandated by law to protect and manage the natural resources at the base. The nature area on base provides habitat, in the midst of urban development, for many wildlife species.

Natural resource protection requirements are regulated by state and federal agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife



One of McClellan's vernal pools in bloom—also referred to as "Fairy Rings."

Services, Dept. of Agriculture, and California Fish and Game. As the base transitions towards closure, coordination with these regulatory agencies is necessary to ensure that the

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responsibility and requirements mandated by law to protect natural resources are transferred appropriately. Formal consultations with the regulatory agencies concerning compensation for adverse impacts on the environment (mitigation) are part of the requirements if future reuse proposals disturb these natural resource areas.


Until property transfers are complete, the Air Force will continue to manage and protect the base's natural resources.

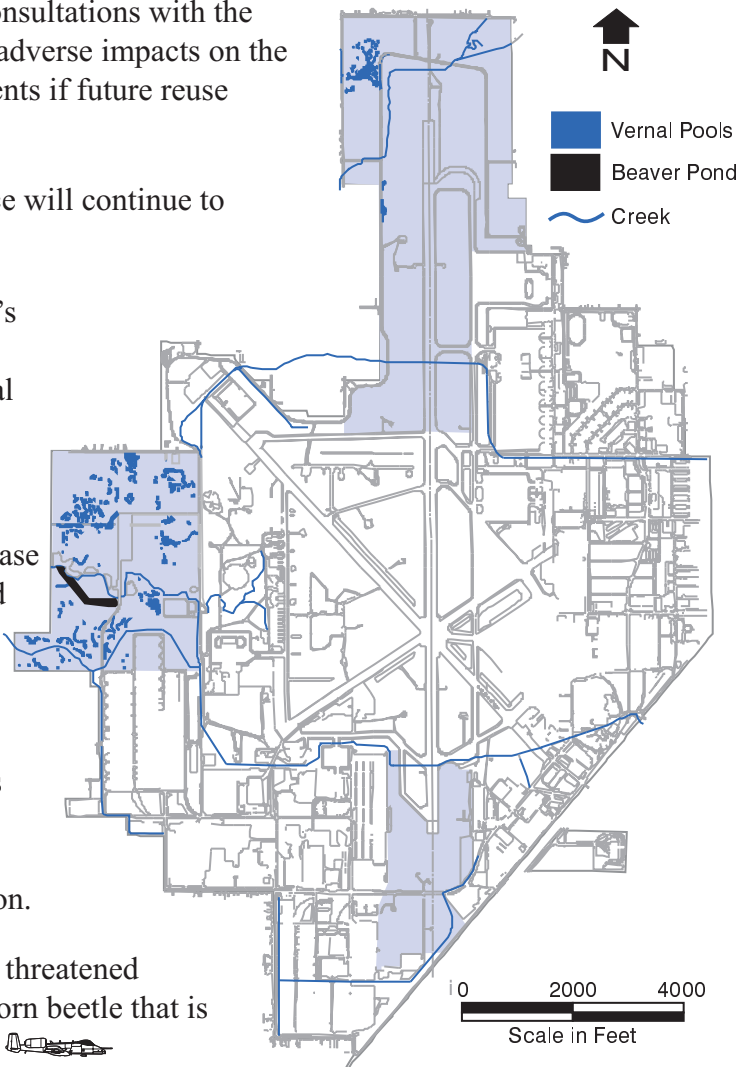
For more information or a brochure on McClellan's natural and cultural resources, call Larry Blevins, Environmental Management's Natural and Cultural Resource Manager, at 643-3672, ext. 318.

Flood Control Measures for Base Creeks

While preparing creeks on McClellan Air Force Base for El Niño, base personnel inadvertently uprooted multiple elderberry shrubs along the creek banks.

McClellan personnel are working with the Army Corps of Engineers and the federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to rectify the incident. Wildlands Inc. is currently evaluating the situation and will propose options for the area in a plan that the community will have an opportunity to comment on.


The elderberry shrub, while not an endangered or threatened species, is habitat to the Valley Elderberry Longhorn beetle that is currently on the federal list of threatened species. 



Continuing Clean Up

At the January 1998 Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting and in the January environmental newsletter, McClellan presented removal actions for five low level radiation sites. At that time, three of the sites were being addressed in a document (Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis - EE/CA), and RAB community input was gathered for that effort.

McClellan will address the other two sites, CS-10 and PRL-32 (both on the western side of the base), through another EE/CA document that will be made available for public review at the draft stage and will be available through the base's Administrative Record or McClellan's


Environmental Management web site (www.mcclellan.af.mil/EM). The public comment period will start when the draft document comes out on May 29, 1998 and run through July 29, 1998. The base requests advice on the recommended approach for cleaning up the low level radioactive contamination, determining cleanup levels, and off-base transportation and disposal of radioactively contaminated soil. Comments should be directed through RAB community members, who represent the community regarding McClellan's environmental cleanup program. The RAB community co-chair is Chuck Yarbrough, (916) 643-0635, ext. 447. 

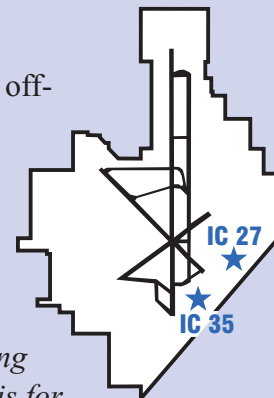
Two More Soil Vapor Extraction Systems Planned

McClellan is preparing to clean up two more areas identified at Investigative Clusters (IC) 27 and 35 with soil contamination. IC 27 is adjacent to Building 311 and IC 35 is adjacent to Building 431 on the southeastern side of the base. Though contamination does not pose an immediate threat to human health, it could be a source of continuing groundwater contamination.

Installation and operation of soil vapor extraction (SVE) systems are being evaluated as the remedy for removal of volatile organic compounds from the soil at both locations. The SVE process uses a vacuum to pull air through the soil and strip away volatile contamination. The contaminated soil

vapors are then routed to an off-gas treatment system.

The recommendation to clean up these two areas using SVE will be available in two separate site-specific documents called *Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis for Soil Vapor Extraction* reports. Drafts of both documents will be available for public comment and review March 30 through April 29, 1998 at the base's Administrative Record or on Environmental Management's web page at: <http://www.mcclellan.af.mil/EM> 




Preparation for Cleanup Levels

To date, cleanup actions taken at McClellan have been interim measures to control and remove the largest amounts of contamination ensuring protection of human health and the environment. McClellan AFB is now developing a Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) Feasibility Study that will establish cleanup objectives for the soils and groundwater moving beyond the current actions of containment. The feasibility study will also evaluate the alternatives (other ways) the soils and groundwater can be cleaned up for VOCs. Each alternative will be evaluated for seven criteria specified in the *Guidance for Conducting Remedial Investigations and Feasibilities Studies under CERCLA* (U.S. EPA, 1988). The criteria are:

- how well it protects us and the environment
- how well it complies with all the environmental laws on cleanup levels and discharges from cleanup systems
- how it will actually reduce the amount of contamination or at least keep the contamination from being harmful

- how good of an overall permanent solution it is
- how well will it work immediately
- how easy is it to do, and
- how much will it cost.

Based upon the evaluations in the feasibility study, McClellan AFB will propose a cleanup solution and hold a public meeting. After receiving public comment, McClellan, U.S. EPA, and Cal/EPA will sign a Record of Decision establishing final cleanup levels for the soils and groundwater contamination at McClellan AFB. The Record of Decision will be for volatile organic compounds and is scheduled to be finalized the summer of 1999. Other types of contamination will be addressed in later years.

McClellan AFB will be seeking advice from the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) on the objectives set in the feasibility study. Comments should be directed through RAB community members. The RAB community co-chair is Chuck Yarbrough at (916) 643-0635, ext. 447. 



The *Environmental Action Update* is a publication of the Environmental Public Affairs Office at McClellan AFB, California, designed to keep the public informed of environmental activities at the base. For questions, comments, or to be added to the mailing list, please write to SM-ALC/PAE, 5050 Dudley Blvd., Suite 3, McClellan AFB, CA 95652-1389 or phone (916) 643-1742, ext. 354.

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Sustaining the natural and cultural resources at the base includes familiarization of and education about these resources to base employees and the local community. As part of McClellan's commitment to that, the base plans several events around the nationally celebrated Earth Day, April 22, and National Preservation Week in May.



Earth Week (April 18-24) Events:

Sacramento Urban Creeks Council Creek Cleanup

Saturday, April 18

Join volunteers from across the county in this annual event. If you would like to participate on a McClellan team, call Margaret Gidding, 643-1742, ext. 354 by April 10.

***At Left:** A community volunteer helps clean Don Julio Creek during a past Sacramento Urban Creeks Council creek cleanup effort.*



Arbor Day Tree Planting

Monday, April 20

A cub scout troop will participate in planting more trees on base with a warm welcome from the 77th Air Base Wing commander, Col. Ard. McClellan has received the Tree City U.S.A. Award from the National Arbor Tree Foundation five consecutive years for its tree planting efforts.

***At Left:** A community volunteer helps plant a tree by Beaver Pond on base after creek cleanup efforts were finished.*

***Below:** The aviation museum, home to many different types of aircraft used in the past, gives community members, groups and school children an opportunity to look into the rich history of military aviation.*



Vernal Pools Tours

Wednesday, April 22

Several daytime tours for elementary school children and Capehart housing youth will be given. There will also be an evening tour for Restoration Advisory Board members as a training session.

Historic Preservation Week (May 10-16):

A Dedication Ceremony

Wednesday, May 13

A plaque displaying McClellan's historic district will be dedicated at the Aviation Museum .

A cub scout tour of the Aviation Museum

Saturday, May 9

Did you know information you may have about past disposal practices at the base can help clean up efforts today?

Information about how and where old oil or solvents were disposed of really helps McClellan's Environmental Management (EM) personnel with cleanup efforts at the base. Checking into leads from current or former base employees helps confirm previously gathered information from records searches and helps personnel pinpoint specific areas and types of contamination to test for.


A good example of this was when a current base employee, Stan Davis, recently identified an area to EM personnel. Davis remembered six to eight shallow gravel pits used for dumping old oil and solvents in the area of Freedom Park on the west side of the baseball diamonds.

Research and sampling done to date confirm that recreational activities done in the Freedom Park area are safe, posing no immediate threat to human health or the environment. Further evaluation will determine whether cleanup actions will be taken in the future.

The time frame was the early '70s when the 552nd Division occupied hangars in that area. EM personnel had previously identified an old landfill in that area, and can now plan further testing based on the identification of specific types of contaminants. Currently, monitoring wells already in the area are regularly sampled

Stan Davis, base employee, reviews aerial photographs with Environmental Management personnel, Diane Arreola and Tamara Zielinski, while identifying past disposal areas for oil and solvents.

and lab results have not detected any harmful levels of contamination.

This type of information helps speed up the cleanup efforts and is always welcome. The base is only interested in the information for cleanup purposes and people can remain anonymous if they wish. If you have information, call Margaret Gidding, Environmental Community Relations Coordinator, at (916) 643-1742, ext. 354 or Chuck Yarbrough, Restoration Advisory Board Community Co-Chair at (916) 643-0635, ext. 447. 



Internet Sites of Interest:

Hazardous waste cleanup:
<http://clu-in.com> provides excellent links for remediation research and many other environmental sites to answer many questions.

Groundwater remediation:
<http://www.gwrtac.org> has groundwater remediation technology reports.

U.S. EPA: <http://earth1.epa.gov> gives access to U.S. EPA's offices and regions, standards, regulations, and database resources.

Come visit McClellan's EM Home Page.
<http://www.mcclellan.af.mil/EM>
Get information about the Information Repository.



Upcoming Meetings

RAB General Meeting *(See Agenda Inside)*

April 15, 1998 6-9 pm
Vineland School Auditorium
6450 20th Street, Rio Linda

RAB Training - Vernal Pools Tour

April 22, 1998 5:45-8 pm

RAB Training - Air Quality

May 7, 1998 6:30-8:30 pm
269D Conference Room

RAB Community Relations Committee Meeting

June 17, 1998 6:30-8:30 pm
269 D Conference Room

RAB Reuse/Technical Report Review Committee Meeting

Tentative July 9, 1998 6-8 pm
269 D Conference Room



Recently Issued Documents

All recently issued decision documents are available at the Administrative Record at McClellan AFB. Call Danny Durkee at 643-1742 x 347, for details.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT REMEDIAL SCOREBOARD

As of **February 1st, 1998**
Pounds of Contamination
Removed from Soil and Water:

740,000

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